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Administrative, financial and institutional matters
Continuing review of the functions and operations of the secretariat

Report on efficiency gains made during the biennium 2012–2013

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document summarizes the measures taken by the secretariat in the biennium 2012–2013 with a view to achieving sustainable efficiency gains. It outlines the delivery of relevant outputs and provides detailed examples of specific efficiency gains, including cost savings and costs avoided.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by decision 18/CP.17, requested the Executive Secretary to monitor and report on efficiency gains made during the biennium 2012–2013.

B. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

2. The Subsidiary Body for Implementation may wish to take note of the information presented.

II. Roll-out of the efficiency programme

3. This report should be read in conjunction with document FCCC/SBI/2013/INF.5, which provides details of the actions taken and the method adopted by the secretariat in 2012 to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations in a sustainable manner.

4. In line with the Executive Secretary's aspiration that the secretariat become a top-performing organization and building on the commitment by the secretariat's management team and staff for continuous improvement, the secretariat has continued taking numerous initiatives in 2013 to enhance its capacity and achieve measurable efficiency gains and cost savings.

5. Having adopted the Six Sigma[1] DMAIIC (define, measure, analyse, improve, implement and control) process improvement framework, the secretariat conducted 13 workouts to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of selected operations. The workouts bring together the people involved in doing the day-to-day job, who, through a facilitation process, identify the root causes and constraints of the related process or operation and generate applicable solutions aimed at producing significant and sustainable improvements and efficiency gains.

6. All 13 workouts were conducted successfully, and the vast majority of recommendations made by the workout teams were approved by the respective decision-making panels. Achievements made as a result of the workouts are described in chapter III below.

7. The efficiency programme has developed into a secretariat-wide effort during 2012–2013. Staff and/or managers from each of the 10 secretariat programmes participated in workouts, with some 100 participants taking part. In total, 19 managers took part as decision-making panel members, including 9 from the senior management team. Overall, 27 staff and managers from nine programmes successfully participated in training and coaching sessions provided under the secretariat's efficiency programme. A total of 25 staff and managers were trained to the level of workout facilitators/practitioners, and 7 staff members have been trained, coached and certified to the level of lead facilitators. Statistical analysis and data mining training was provided to 6 staff. Training on the data analysis door[2] was delivered to 5 facilitators.

[1] Six Sigma is a set of tools and strategies for process improvement.

[2] The phrase "data analysis door" refers to a selection of tools and techniques that facilitate gaining an understanding of processes from the data in question.

8. An online collaboration platform based on SharePoint for the efficiency programme has been developed and made available with, inter alia, information on initiatives proposed or implemented, background and learning material, user-friendly online submission templates for new proposals and reporting purposes, a draft wiki[3] of lead facilitators, useful links and references to relevant mandates provided by the COP. This platform also supports the LEAN[4] projects management office.

9. Further outputs include the following:

(a) A benefits realization tracking system, which has been established and regularly updated;

(b) Online training material on LEAN and Six Sigma, which has been made available on the secretariat's learning management system;

(c) An innovative prioritization and selection process, which has been established and successfully implemented to channel ideas and proposals efficiently and effectively;

(d) Meetings with staff and management, as well as internal newsletter articles, which have been used as a means to raise awareness and seek feedback on the efficiency programme.

III. Efficiency gains resulting from specific activities

A. Efficiency workouts and related initiatives undertaken in 2012–2013

10. Workouts are designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of secretariat operations with an emphasis on generating net cost savings. However, the LEAN programme is wider and holistic. In addition to cost savings, the objectives extend to: increasing client satisfaction, streamlining processes and operations by eliminating or minimizing non value added activities, improving quality and preventing recurrence of unwanted incidents, reducing lead time, and assessing and reducing risks.

11. The key criteria for selecting and prioritizing workouts and other improvement projects in the secretariat and measures for their success include the following:

(a) Net financial benefits;

(b) Positive impacts on the accomplishment of secretariat goals;

(c) Reduced risk and higher compliance with rules and regulations;

(d) Higher levels of client satisfaction;

(e) Reduced lead time.

12. The above-mentioned criteria and measures are linked. For example, measures to reduce costs should not result in lower client satisfaction or a higher lead time. In this sense, the concept of efficiency applied in the secretariat includes, but is not limited to, reducing costs.

[3] The wiki is a SharePoint based application that allows the lead facilitators to add to, modify or delete content of their work in collaboration with other staff.

[4] LEAN is a collection of principles, methods and tools that improve the speed and efficiency of any process by eliminating waste. For the purposes of effective in-house communication, the secretariat's efficiency programme is also referred to as the LEAN programme.

13. This chapter provides a summary of the workouts conducted in 2012–2013, as well as related initiatives, grouped into thematic areas where appropriate. Some of the initiatives have already resulted in tangible measurable efficiency gains, while others are still in an early implementation stage.

1. Staff travel

14. The United Nations and, in particular, the UNFCCC secretariat have given increased attention to methods aimed at reducing both the economic costs and environmental impact of staff travel, resulting in a number of significant changes to secretariat policy.

15. In March 2013, the UNFCCC secretariat conducted an efficiency workout with a view to achieving cost savings relating to air ticketing and to streamlining the processing of travel arrangements for staff. A number of key improvements were identified and approved by a decision-making panel. The subsequent revision to the secretariat's travel policy and procedural documentation coincided with the revision of the United Nations Secretariat's travel policy. As some of the provisions of the new United Nations Secretariat policy had already been accounted for in the revised UNFCCC travel policy, the new United Nations provisions were adopted and implemented by the UNFCCC secretariat without delay in September 2013. Additional improvements identified by the workout team and by the secretariat's Administrative Services programme were incorporated into the new UNFCCC travel policy and took effect in March 2014.

16. Key innovations of the new UNFCCC travel policy include:

(a) Establishing strict benchmarks for staff when confirming official travel itineraries. To benefit from lower fares that are usually available if booked in advance, all travellers have a responsibility to respond swiftly to itineraries offered. Namely, once the ticketing deadlines imposed by the airline pass, the fares normally undergo a steep increase, often by several hundred euros. If no objection is raised by either the traveller or the programme by the allocated deadline, the ticket will be issued as initially proposed;

(b) Removing train travel time from air travel calculations, that is, excluding train transfers to and from airports in the computation of the total travel duration, for example, to determine the class of service;

(c) Utilizing frequent flyer miles collected as a result of official UNFCCC travel for official travel purposes and not for private use;

(d) Requiring travel in economy class for certain destinations, even if the travel time is over 9 (direct flight) or 11 (multi-leg connection) hours. In the past, travellers who were flying to places such as New York or Addis Ababa might travel in different classes, depending on whether a longer or shorter route happened to be available at the moment of booking. Under the new policy, destinations for which there is a scheduled daily direct flight of less than 9 hours (or an indirect one of less than 11 hours) will qualify for economy class tickets only, irrespective of the actual itinerary chosen;

(e) Incentivizing voluntary downgrades. The new United Nations policy provides for the option of voluntary downgrades. The UNFCCC secretariat embraces this option and encourages staff to make use of it, incentivizing it by offering an extra day off to those who opt for economy instead of business class for an official mission. The secretariat has introduced incentives to encourage emission and cost savings and to mitigate some of the inconveniences of long-haul economy class flights;

(f) Abandoning the practice of allowing staff alternative itineraries that are more expensive than the official fare (previously by up to 20 per cent or EUR 250), for both official travel and private requests;

(g) Discontinuing payment of 20 per cent daily subsistence allowance (DSA) to staff attending full-board retreats or training;

(h) Discontinuing payment of DSA to staff for overnight flights.

17. The Administrative Services programme has put systems in place to track the benefits of the recently implemented policy changes, which will be monitored on a pilot basis over the next six months. Changes such as the establishment of strict benchmarks for official travel itineraries, direct versus indirect routing, business versus economy class, discontinuation of DSA payments for overnight flights, changes to home leave entitlements and discontinuation of 20 per cent DSA for retreats or training, as well as the impact these policy changes have on the secretariat's carbon footprint, will all be measured as part of the pilot scheme.

18. The secretariat adopted and implemented the new United Nations travel policy in September 2013. In the final four months of 2013, the secretariat avoided costs for home leave amounting to EUR 45,046, which reflects a 58.6 per cent cost reduction resulting from the new policy.

19. In addition to the above-mentioned measures, the secretariat took a number of initiatives in 2012–2013 that have already resulted in efficiency gains relating to staff travel and/or are expected to result in measurable benefits and cost savings.

20. The secretariat adopted a special policy for staff travel to COP 18, held in Doha, Qatar, whereby all travel to Doha was made in economy class, regardless of the duration of the flight or journey. This was a special arrangement for group travel, as provided for under the UNFCCC travel policy. The implementation of this policy resulted in a cost saving per ticket of approximately USD 2,800, on average, for the 251 travelling staff, with a total cost avoidance of USD 0.7 million. In addition, the carbon footprint per flight was reduced by approximately 50 per cent.

21. In 2012, the secretariat was included in the Lufthansa Partnership programme. As a result, the secretariat started accruing points that are able to be exchanged for tickets, upgrades, excess baggage fees and taxes. These points are accrued through tickets booked with Lufthansa and paid for by the secretariat's travel agency. To date, the secretariat has accrued over one million points through this programme, which is the equivalent of between USD 20,000 and USD 25,000 in avoided travel costs.

22. In October 2012, a workout team reviewed the workflows and processes related to the secretariat's travel plan. Updated daily, the travel plan serves as the basis for authorizing official travel by secretariat staff. It serves multiple purposes, including reducing the cost of mission travel for the secretariat by limiting multiple attendance. The processing of invitations to external events was considered to be slow, cumbersome and not fully effective. The workout resulted in a number of improvements, including a reduction in process loops, which was implemented quickly and allowed the team responsible for the travel plan to effectively manage the high workload despite the prolonged absence of a team member. In addition, the secretariat developed standard operating procedures for the travel plan, which came into effect in March 2014, and revised its database for the travel plan with a view to enhancing the process and aligning it to the United Nations staff travel policy (ST/AI/2013/3). The revised procedures and tools underpin the responsible management of resources by encouraging virtual participation and further limiting multiple attendance at events.

23. Since the entry into effect of the standard operating procedures, users of the travel plan have indicated that the revised process allows for a shorter lead time, less overtime and a more effective use of available human resources, less repetition of process steps (owing to higher quality input from the start), better process controls (owing to an enhanced use of

information technology), and clear roles and responsibilities. Measures are being put in place to monitor, track and report on actual benefits.

2. Enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the recruitment process

24. The management team identified enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the recruitment process to be a key area for improvement in 2012. It was noted that the process of recruitment was too long (in excess of three months on average), which resulted in a number of negative implications.

25. The challenge for the workout team was to identify opportunities to improve the recruitment process and to recommend applicable solutions to reduce the average recruitment lead time by at least 10 per cent. In July 2012, seven solutions were identified by the team and approved by a decision-making panel. As a result, the secretariat:

(a) Regularly replaced on-site interviews for professional posts at the P-2 and P-3 levels with interviews conducted remotely by video communication. Hiring managers who wish to conduct remote interviews for professional posts at the P-4 level may also employ this method;

(b) Established an effective control mechanism over each phase of the recruitment process, from beginning to end, to reduce the recruitment lead time and variability;

(c) Adopted standard operating procedures clearly outlining roles and responsibilities to avoid duplication of work and rework.

26. Estimated savings realized by conducting video interviews in 2013 with a total of 80 candidates interviewed remotely amount to USD 130,000. Additional savings are expected for each future recruitment case at the P-2/P-3 (and possibly P-4) levels. A further result of the reduction in recruitment travel is the avoidance of travel-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Establishing an effective (proactive) tracking and control mechanism over each phase from the beginning to the end of the recruitment process is expected to reduce the average recruitment lead time and the process variability. The electronic monitoring of applications in progress and the new standard operating procedures will reduce the total annual content of work for the overall process of recruitment by an estimated 1,400 hours, with a cost saving of approximately USD 83,000.

3. Streamlining the processing of clean development mechanism fees and invoices

27. Another priority for improvement in 2012 was streamlining the processing of clean development mechanism (CDM) fees and invoices. In July, a workout team was tasked with identifying opportunities to streamline the process and developing applicable solutions to enhance the efficiency, transparency, consistency and timeliness of the process.

28. Implementation of the solutions resulted in various tangible benefits. Streamlining the process and providing clear guidelines and correct and full information to all points of contact reduced the content of work for processing fees in relation to the registration of the CDM projects and the issuance of certified emission reduction units by 34 per cent, with an annual effort reduction of 265 hours. The number of queries related to bank account information was reduced by 95 per cent, with a yearly time saving of 210 hours. Centralizing and sharing documents reduced the content of work for related activities by 35 per cent, with a yearly working time reduction of 250 hours. The total yearly working time reduction resulting from this improvement initiative was approximately 725 hours, with an estimated cost saving of USD 42,000. In addition, the end-to-end process lead time was reduced by 25 per cent from 16 weeks to 12 weeks, on average.

4. Streamlining the process of electing members to the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and constituted bodies of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol

29. The Legal Affairs (LA) programme supports the process of electing members to the bodies established under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol. In view of the large number of constituted bodies and the fact that regional groups and constituencies find it increasingly difficult to reach consensus with regard to their nominations, significant challenges existed in completing the election process in time to ensure a smooth conclusion of the elections by the conclusion of the sessions of the COP and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP). The programme conducted a workout to streamline the process in support of the elections, to ensure timely conclusion of the elections, to further reduce errors in the process and to enhance the allocation of secretariat resources.

30. As a result, communication with all stakeholders was enhanced, and information was provided to Parties through briefings, the UNFCCC website and social media. For the elections held during the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Warsaw, Poland, in November 2013, up-to-date information was regularly provided to Parties on the status of nominations and the deadline for the submission of nominations. This proved to be successful as 90 per cent of the nominations were received by the deadline and the remaining 10 per cent were submitted after the conference in early 2014. In comparison, in 2011, only 69 per cent of the nominations were received by the deadline, and in 2012, only 64 per cent. The secretariat's new extranet, containing detailed information about membership arrangements, served as a useful platform for the chairs of regional groups and constituencies. Feedback received from chairs was positive, and the extranet will be further improved to include more user-friendly features to assist the chairs of regional groups and constituencies in their consultations.

5. Updating the secretariat's internal decision-making process on workshops and meetings

31. The secretariat's Intergovernmental Planning Committee "green light" process is a key mechanism to ensure in-house coordination on timing, venue, fundraising and legal issues of mandated workshops and other meetings. A workout team was tasked with developing practical solutions to improve the process, as it was noted that too much time of selected staff and managers was spent on the collection and analysis of the requests for green lights to hold mandated events and other meetings. The implementation of approved solutions is ongoing, including the consolidation of various meeting calendars with overlapping information and the provision of templates facilitating the estimation of the costs of holding meetings in Bonn, Germany, and potential alternative locations.

6. Enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of arrangements for meetings of the Compliance Committee of the Kyoto Protocol

32. The LA programme recognized that its support structure for the Compliance Committee of the Kyoto Protocol did not maximize the technical strengths of the professional staff assigned to support the committee and tended instead to require them to do tasks that could be carried out by staff with different expertise. In addition, its staff tended to be stretched to capacity during crucial periods in the lead-up to meetings, with opportunities for automation not being fully utilized and processes not optimized to ensure full control and efficient planning. The following key challenges were identified: to enhance the timeliness and consistency of tasks related to meeting support, to optimize internal procedures in order to reduce person hours spent in meeting preparation, to

improve the meeting planning process to more effectively manage the 'crunch' period leading up to a meeting and to improve stakeholder satisfaction.

33. Each meeting costs USD 70,000, on average. Owing to various inefficiencies in the meeting planning and support processes, meeting goals are not always achieved within the designated time frame, with work that should have been completed during the course of the meeting sometimes having to be continued for some time after the meeting has ended. This requires the hiring of additional resources, as well as overtime for existing staff. The objective of the process improvement recommendations is to eliminate, or reduce to a bare minimum, the ongoing work that should have been completed during the meeting.

34. The initiative is still in the implementation stage; however, some quick wins have already been achieved: an awareness and training campaign has been concluded. The LA programme has raised awareness with the Compliance Committee, highlighting concerns relating to low levels of participation and the importance of considering the demands of membership when making a nomination. Benefits have been evidenced in relation to an increased level of awareness of roles and responsibilities as a result of induction training for new and alternate members. A reactive approach to session planning has been replaced by a proactive one, with robust planning for the sessions at its core. Proposed dates for the meetings of the Compliance Committee plenary for 2014 were discussed and accepted by the plenary. Thus, the LA programme was able to secure bookings on the United Nations Campus in Bonn for these two meetings, with direct cost avoidance of outsourcing the venue (as would have occurred for past events). A process has been implemented to eliminate the recurrence of unwanted incidents. Key issues during meetings are recorded and contingency actions implemented with a view to preventing the recurrence of similar incidents. Implementation measures are ongoing in 2014.

7. Enhancing the process of reporting to contributors

35. It was noted that reports to contributors were often submitted late and that in some cases, the quality of draft reports submitted by the responsible officers to the secretariat's budget team was not acceptable. It was further noted that roles and responsibilities in the internal process were unclear and that a system to match individual expenditures to contributors was not in place. Therefore, a workout was conducted with a view to enhancing the quality and timeliness of reporting to contributors. Measures approved at the workout are intended to enhance cash flow and transparency about the use of funds, and include:

(a) Standardizing reporting;

(b) Raising awareness among staff and managers;

(c) Defining roles and responsibilities;

(d) Enhancing the monitoring of contributions and expenditures.

36. As at March 2014, standard operating procedures are in the approval process. In addition, it is anticipated that the issue of how to match expenditures to contributors will be addressed with the implementation of Umoja, the United Nations new enterprise resource planning system to manage procurement, finance, supply chains, logistics and human resources, scheduled for deployment in mid-2015.

8. Streamlining and further enhancing the effectiveness of the process of submission and consideration of the clean development mechanism methodologies

37. In 2013, a team identified opportunities to streamline and further enhance the effectiveness of the process of the submission and consideration of the CDM

methodologies. Applicable solutions were approved, and a number of measures agreed on this basis. These include:

(a) Developing internal procedures for bottom-up submissions;

(b) Developing guidelines for members of the CDM Methodologies Panel;

(c) Developing templates and checklists;

(d) Developing criteria for case allocation to the CDM Methodologies Panel members;

(e) Testing electronic means to identify and solve issues prior to meetings;

(f) Developing an internal monitoring manual for the standards setting unit;

(g) Standardizing the presentation format and content.

38. Implementation measures are ongoing and/or scheduled for 2014.

9. Sustainable Development Mechanisms programme regulatory development process in support of regulatory bodies

39. The Sustainable Development Mechanisms (SDM) programme identified its regulatory development process in support of regulatory bodies as a crucial area for improvement in 2013. It was noted that the regulatory process had been criticized for being lengthy, unclear and sometimes unpredictable, and improving this process was considered critical for the CDM and joint implementation (JI). A workout resulted in a number of approved solutions that are scheduled for implementation, starting in the third quarter of 2014.

10. Improving tracking of payments to the clean development mechanism experts

40. SDM identified risks in relation to the process of tracking payments to the CDM experts, including possible non-payment and potential overpayment. A workout team addressed this challenge, and a number of solutions were approved, including the development of standard operating procedures and relevant templates. Implementation of solutions is ongoing.

11. Streamlining the process for formally engaging external organizations and private entities

41. The secretariat conducted a workout with the aim of streamlining the process of formally engaging external organizations and private entities. The workout team identified opportunities to improve the process, and the implementation of solutions is ongoing. Two components of the recommended solutions have so far been completed, including the compilation of a database of instrument types and examples currently in use, and the compilation of relevant United Nations and UNFCCC rules, regulations and guidelines, for example, the existing guidelines on public–private partnerships.

12. Enhancing the process of preparing releases of the greenhouse gas data interface

42. Three updates are made available on the UNFCCC website through the GHG data interface each year. The process of planning, preparing, testing and releasing the data is complex and requires a significant effort to ensure timely availability of accurate data. The Mitigation, Data and Analysis (MDA) programme noted that while delays in the release of updates on the UNFCCC website were rare, internal delays and other issues in the process were causing frustration among staff involved. In 2013, the MDA programme conducted a workout jointly with the Information Technology Services programme and identified

opportunities to improve the process. Approved solutions are expected to reduce the number of working hours spent on the process, the lead time and the risk of potential inaccuracies in the data released.

43. Implementation commenced in 2013 with the introduction of a new way of planning for the data release. While previously the planning was done in a top-down manner, the new approach is consultative and inclusive, and while the previous approach took approximately one week with high levels of stress and frustration, today, the streamlined planning is done during the course of a planning meeting and is concluded and agreed the same day. In addition, the planning team was reduced by one team member, who had only played a role as an observer. Further solutions will be implemented in 2014.

13. Correspondence management

44. Managing incoming correspondence to the secretariat is carried out by two secretariat programmes (Administrative Services and Executive Direction and Management). In 2013, a team of staff from both programmes undertook a detailed process mapping exercise which resulted in the identification of overlaps and opportunities for consolidating work. Measures are being taken to address the issues identified, including the adoption of standard operating procedures and the establishment of a submission portal.

B. Other activities enhancing efficiency and cost-effectiveness

45. In addition to adopting and implementing the approach of the workouts for improving operations through a facilitative process using LEAN and Six Sigma tools, many other activities undertaken by the secretariat contributed to enhancing efficiency in the biennium 2012–2013, as efficiency was taken into account in daily decision-making, policymaking and regular operations. The following paragraphs provide examples of good practices in the organization and implementation of meetings, including careful choice of meeting locations, back-to-back meetings where appropriate, partnership arrangements and effective use of information and communication technology to facilitate cost-effective participation and promote information sharing, networking and awareness-raising among a multitude of stakeholders in the UNFCCC process. The information is not comprehensive, as all 10 secretariat programmes undertake activities with the aim of implementing their mandates efficiently and effectively.

46. **The establishment of a documents focal points (DFP) team to strengthen the coordination of document processing and enhance document guidelines and workflows for all bodies.** Designated staff are assigned to the DFP team for sessional periods. The absence of formal roles, responsibilities and workflows led to inefficiencies, confusion among different actors and increased stress during sessions. Consistent guidelines have now been established, and document management has been streamlined for all bodies. Some of the benefits are enhanced transparency and easier and faster access to documents on the UNFCCC website.

47. **The organization of Technology Executive Committee (TEC) meetings in Bonn, instead of away from Bonn**. It is now common practice to hold the three TEC meetings per year in Bonn, which not only saves the secretariat approximately USD 20,000 per meeting in staff travel costs, but also allows the whole team to attend the meetings, increasing the quality of meeting support. Total related staff travel cost savings for 2012–2013 are estimated at approximately USD 120,000.

48. **The organization of one expert meeting and two workshops in conjunction with TEC meetings, rather than stand-alone events**. Instead of having to bring in participants for six events (three TEC meetings, one expert meeting and two workshops), the additional

meetings were held in conjunction with the TEC meetings, essentially halving the annual costs of travel for these events. This resulted in cost savings of approximately USD 25,000 per event.

49. **Establishment of a strategic partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme in organizing a workshop**. The cost to the secretariat of organizing this workshop, had it borne the total cost alone, would have amounted to approximately USD 100,000; accordingly, approximately USD 50,000 was saved as a result of this cost-sharing arrangement.

50. **Use of observers of TEC meetings as resource persons for thematic dialogues organized as part of the TEC meetings**. Instead of inviting and funding resource persons to participate in the thematic dialogues, relevant observers who registered for the TEC meetings were identified to participate in the dialogues. In the past, on average, three resource persons were invited to participate in the thematic dialogues, resulting in travel and DSA costs of approximately USD 7,500 per dialogue. Four thematic dialogues were held in 2012–2013, resulting in cost reductions of approximately USD 30,000.

51. **Enhanced use of virtual participation and social media tools**. The secretariat started using virtual participation and social media in 2012 as a means of enhancing openness, transparency and inclusiveness in the following areas:

(a) Climate finance work programme: during the long-term finance (LTF) workshops in 2012 and 2013, webinars were organized to invigorate participation in the discussion on LTF and to solicit insights emerging from the work undertaken throughout 2013. The webinars brought in an average of 270 participants per event, including those from non-governmental organizations who could not otherwise attend owing to financial constraints. Positive feedback having been received from both Parties and observers, a further webinar has been scheduled for April 2014;

(b) Dialogue with the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth: on the occasion of International Youth Day 2013, the secretariat facilitated a virtual dialogue via Twitter between the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and YOUNGOs on the impact of climate change on youth migration. Hundreds of young people engaged in a virtual dialogue with the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, which formed the basis for the Envoy's broad engagement with YOUNGOs at COP 19/CMP 9;

(c) During the fourth part of the second session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) held from 10 to 14 March 2014 in Bonn, the secretariat provided an online facility, the ADP Virtual Expo, to Parties and observers and invited them to upload relevant material for the specific topics discussed at technical expert meetings (renewable energy and energy efficiency). Owing to space constraints at the venue, no physical exhibits were possible. Virtual Expo enabled Parties and observers with the relevant expertise to showcase initiatives and projects and enabled the delegates and the global audience to access the information provided. The number of access hits to the Virtual Expo subsite of the UNFCCC website during the session amounted to approximately 37,000, which was 13 per cent of the total access hits to the UNFCCC website.

52. **Using SharePoint to distribute documentation to review experts**. The considerable effort and costs associated with distributing large volumes of documents to experts for GHG inventory reviews have been significantly reduced by using a SharePoint site called the Reference Library, available to experts and containing all the information required for the review.

53. **Workshops on key procedural issues that arise during UNFCCC negotiations**. Insufficient knowledge of programme officers of how to address procedural issues often

resulted in the blockage of the substantive work of negotiating groups. Comprehensive workshops conducted in 2013 addressed these deficiencies and enabled negotiating groups to conduct their work with minimal procedural problems and a higher level of compliance with rules and regulations. These workshops are planned to continue in 2014.

54. **Documentation on workflows for preparing documents, supporting sessions, organizing workshops and providing general team support within the sectoral issues unit of the MDA programme.** Formal documentation on these activities has resulted in reduced training time for new staff, consistency in the application of workflows and greater efficiency due to less iteration.

55. **Enhancement of the effort tracking system.** The SDM programme continued to improve the processes for planning, monitoring and reporting on budget and programme performance. The effort tracking system, a tool that allows the tracking of use of staff and non-staff resources against programme and project activities, now allows for monthly reporting to programme and project management on actual expenditure versus approved budgets. On this basis, SDM management undertakes mid-year reviews of progress in the implementation of the CDM and JI management plans, assesses any variances, evaluates outcomes and identifies potential corrective actions.

56. **Implementation of international public-sector accounting standards as of 1 January 2014.** In order to implement the standards, the secretariat was required to prepare new accounting policies and procedures. This effort was originally budgeted at EUR 200,000 per year for 2012 and 2013 and included the hiring of an additional P-4 manager and consulting costs. The finance unit of the secretariat instead completed preparations using only a consultant, with additional preparation work being carried out by existing staff. The savings amount to EUR 150,000 per year for 2012 and 2013.

57. Other approaches applied by the secretariat in 2012–2013 to achieve value for money include: making the best use of available technology for automation, knowledge management, collaboration and communication; applying best practices in the management of programmes and projects (e.g. implementation of PRINCE2[5] in information system development and the management of projects in other areas of work); and recruiting and retaining staff with the highest standards of efficiency, technical competence and integrity.

IV. Lessons learned

58. Experience gained to date with the workout approach in the secretariat and the use of selected tools from the LEAN Six Sigma tool set, combined with effective project management and benefits tracking, has been positive. Initial resistance by some staff members confronted with the need for change was overcome as they went through the workout process and realized that it presents an excellent opportunity to communicate effectively with relevant colleagues across programme boundaries and that their own views, ideas, concerns and suggestions are taken into consideration.

59. A clear vision and active leadership by the Executive Secretary, a pioneering spirit by individual staff and managers, positive practical experience and increased capacity are the main drivers of cultural change towards continuous improvement. Initially, only a few programmes were ready to go ahead with the workout approach in their own area of work. However, active involvement by staff from various programmes in workout teams and engagement of many programme managers in decision-making panels, combined with

[5] PRINCE2 (an acronym for Projects in Controlled Environments, version 2) is a project management methodology.

effective communication, led to a growing momentum and an increase in the number of participating programmes. The period leading up to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, France, in 2015 will be an extremely busy one for the secretariat. The challenge will be to keep up this momentum and drive for efficiency gains.

60. Training and capacity-building provided in the context of the secretariat's LEAN programme has already provided some co-benefits, including the lead facilitation training of secretariat staff. Not only have the staff trained as lead facilitators gained skills, knowledge and experience in how to run LEAN workouts, they have also been able to apply these new skills in other areas, such as the facilitation of breakout groups during the secretariat's annual supervisory clinic.

V. Activities in 2014 and beyond

61. The secretariat is building on the solid foundation laid during 2012–2013 in terms of identifying opportunities for cost reductions, making efficiency gains and realizing benefits on a daily basis. All workouts conducted in 2014 to date, and all future workouts, will be facilitated by staff certified as lead facilitators. This includes a recent workout conducted in February 2014 with a view to improving the timeliness of reports on GHG inventory reviews and forthcoming workouts on enhancing the preparation of missions by the Executive Secretary and enhancing the process of organizing workshops.

62. In 2014, efficiency training will focus on selected middle managers with a view to building their capacity and conducting strategic projects using LEAN Six Sigma tools. The secretariat will also continue to enhance monitoring and benefits tracking with a view to ensuring the sustainability of improvements and efficiency gains made.